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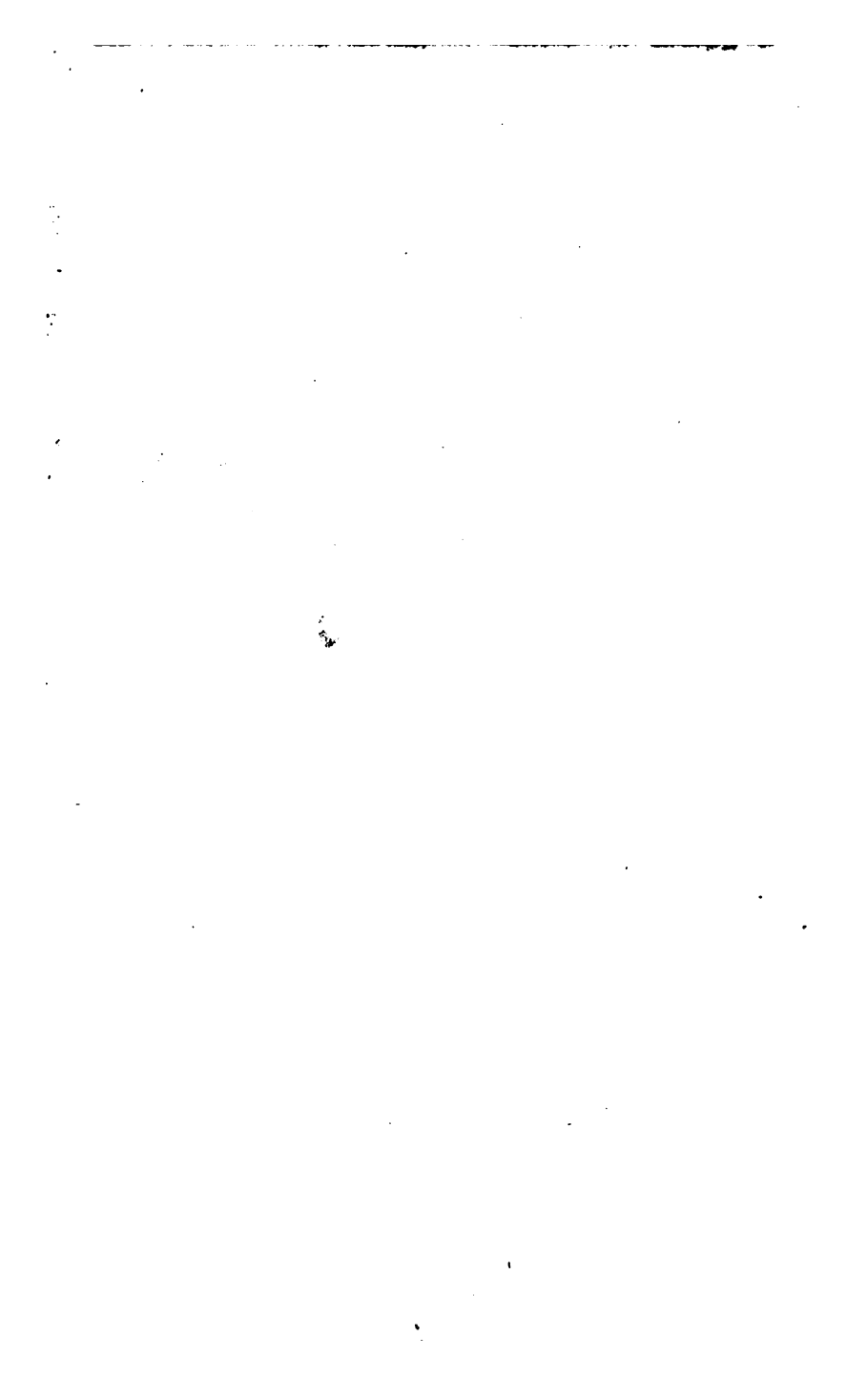
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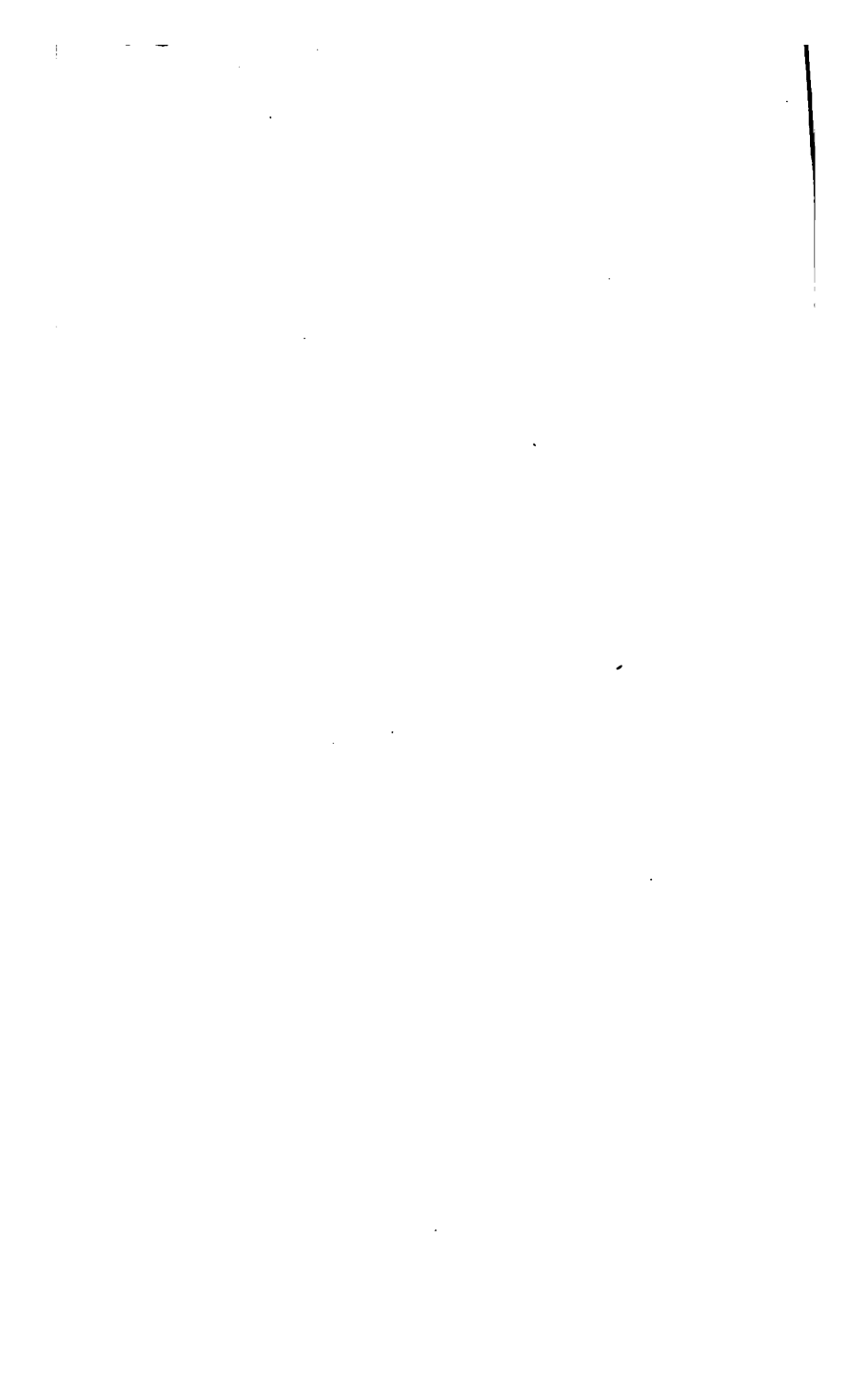


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DECISION AND INDECISION.

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DOMESTICITY AND INTEGRITY.

See Page 15.

Published by E. W. Lacy & Co. 1870

DECISION
AND
INDECISION;

OR,
THE TWO COUSINS.

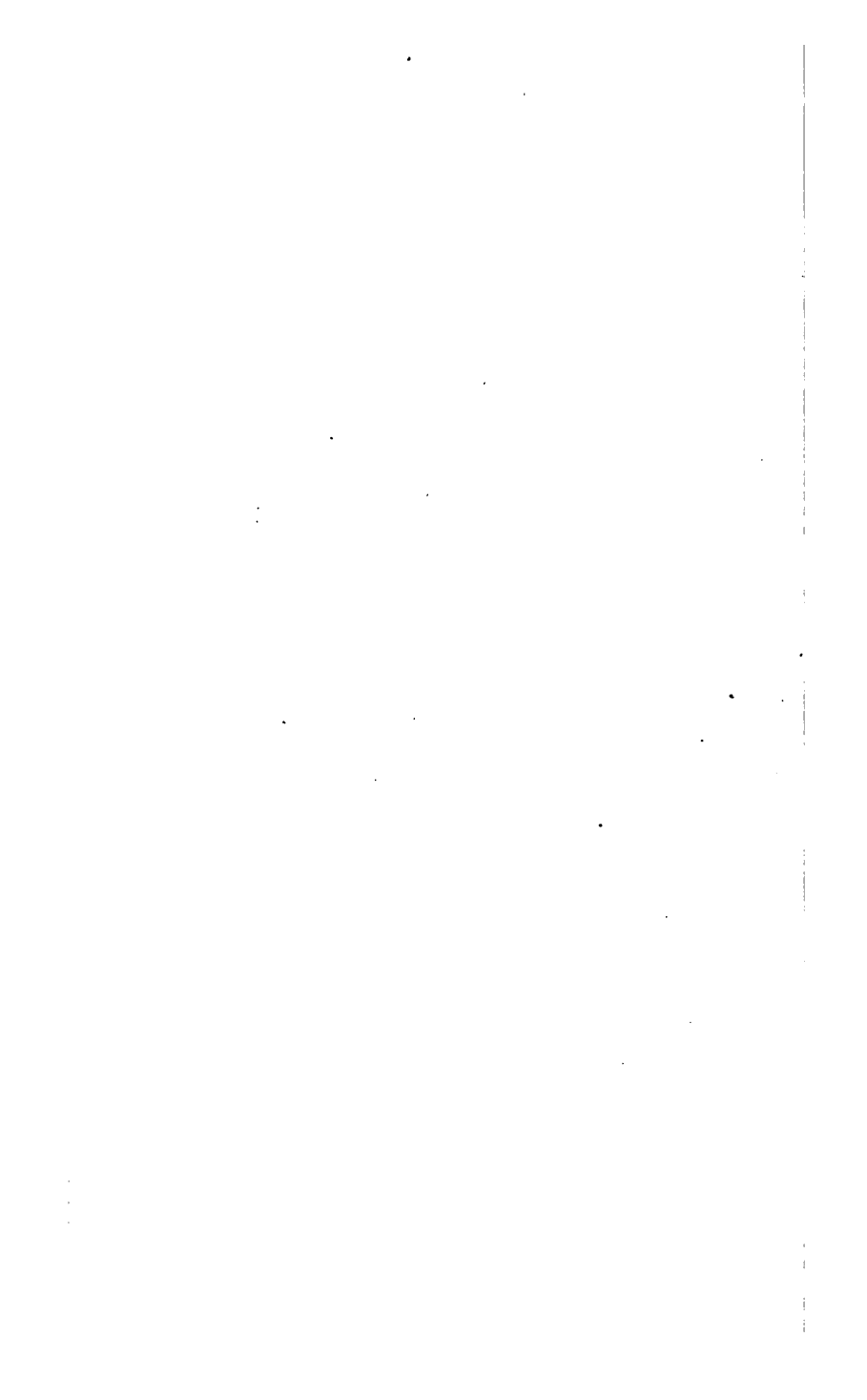
BY THE WIFE OF A WESLEYAN MINISTER.

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1833.

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DECISION AND INDECISION.

CHAPTER I.

NEVER did the sun appear more lovely on the fourth of March, than on the marriage-day of Ann and Emily Hargreaves, who were, at the same time, united to the objects of their warmest affections. Mr. Henry Grey, a respectable solicitor, claimed Ann for his bride; while Emily assumed the title of Mrs. George Harris.

Continuing residents in the manufacturing town of N——, and situated at a convenient distance, they endeavoured to mitigate the pain of separation, by the interchange of social visits; and anxious to possess every necessary qualification for

the management of their respective establishments, they assisted each other's memory, in recalling the examples and instructions of their pious deceased mother; who, prior to her death, had the pleasure and satisfaction of seeing her two daughters renounce the follies and vanities of a deceitful world, sincerely "inquire the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward," and unite themselves to the Methodist Society, of which she had been thirty years a zealous, active member.

Constant in their attendance at the same house of prayer—frequently meeting for religious communion—retaining the affection which had for many years endeared them to each other—and enjoying a large share of conjugal felicity—the seasons quickly passed away, with no other material change, than that each became the happy mother of a fine blooming daughter.

Scarcely however had Mrs. Grey recovered her usual state of health, when she was suddenly called to attend the death-bed of her beloved husband. The

sun of *prosperity* which gilded her earthly prospects, and promised much happiness in future years, "went down, ere it was yet noon," and she was left to wear the mournful weeds of a widow, at the age of twenty-two.

Though painfully sensible of the loss she had sustained, she did "not sorrow as those without *hope*:" her grief was assuaged by the firm and implicit confidence which Mr. Grey placed in his Redeemer's atoning sacrifice—the assurance he possessed of his acceptance with God—and his final triumph over death and the grave. The consolations of the gospel were her support and comfort, under the painful bereavement; and with a heart softened by the afflictive dispensation, she patiently submitted to the chastisement of her heavenly Father.

The suddenness of this event, accompanied with the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit, was the means of more forcibly convincing Mr. Harris of the transitoriness of human life, and stimulating

him to increased devotion in the service of God : it checked the ardour with which he was pursuing the things of this world, and gave that energy and impulse to his christian character, which afterwards so distinguishingly marked his deportment, and enabled him to fill many honourable offices in the church of Christ, with credit and acceptance.

The prattlings of her infant Julia, soon caused the smile of pleasure and delight to revisit the youthful countenance of the widowed mother ; and many times were her eyes suffused with tears, in beholding the folded hands and bended knees of her child, attempting to address that Being who is a “ father to the fatherless, and a husband to the widow.” Never was the dawn of intellect hailed with more rapturous joy, than when the fond parent eagerly listened to unnumbered questions, many of which her own improved understanding was unable satisfactorily to answer : to her it became a

“ Delightful task ! to rear the tender thought,
“ And teach the young idea how to shoot.”

She found her time fully occupied in imparting instruction to her youthful charge—in acts of benevolence—and in assisting her sister, whose delicate state of health, rendered her incapable of performing those duties which her family demanded at her hand.

Julia found her *world* of enjoyment in the society of “ dear mamma,” and “ cousin Ellen ;” the similarity of the age and circumstances of these two cousins, made them constant companions, and an attachment little *less* than generally subsists between sisters, was felt in each bosom, and preserved them from any desire of mixing with other associates. Often did Mrs. Grey join in their childish amusements, in order to secure their confidence, and win their obedience ; various were the methods she used to repress the volatility of Ellen, and persuade Julia to throw aside part of that timidity and diffidence, which cast her excellencies into the shade ;

nor did she fail to store their minds with a knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, and the doctrines therein contained. Sensible that "line must be upon line, precept upon precept," she fainted not, in thus sowing the seeds of piety and virtue upon the youthful soil, but earnestly besought the throne of grace, for those influences of the Holy Spirit to succeed her endeavours, which would cause the seed sown, to germinate, spring forth, and bear an abundant harvest. Year after year was the prayer presented, "Oh, that my child might live before thee!" diligent was she in watching for the fulfilment of her desire, and how was her heart gladdened by the accidental discovery of a note, written by Julia to her cousin, repeating the promise, "they that seek me early, shall find me."

Mrs. Grey observed with thankfulness, the deep seriousness upon her daughter's countenance—more frequent retirement for prayer—and an increased love to the means of grace, and ministers of the gospel. Carefully was the precious embryo

guarded from the withering blast, the blighting mildew, of *mere professors of religion*, while, with maternal solicitude, she watched its full developement in the christian character.

The time allotted for play and recreation, was now devoted to reading, and Julia was often heard to express her surprise, that she should ever have preferred trifling amusement to the cultivation of her mind ; every gratification was cheerfully laid aside to attend her devotional exercises, when the heaving bosom, and the flow of tears, evidenced the emotions of her heart, and the gentle drawings of the Father. Her mother, who was made her confidant upon all occasions, soon became acquainted with her new state of feeling, and the fear that troubled her mind, lest her past ingratitude to God, and obstinacy of heart in not yielding to the requirements of his law, should receive *punishment* instead of the *forgiveness* she so earnestly desired. Encouraged by the repeated promises of scripture, to “ask

and receive," she ventured to hope, that for the sake of Jesus Christ her Saviour, mercy would be extended unto her, and she should rejoice in the salvation of the gospel.

After the services of the sabbath, which had been particularly impressive, she left her mother at the chapel to commemorate the dying love of her Redeemer, and retired to her room earlier than usual. Mrs. Grey fearing that indisposition might be the cause of her daughter's absence from the supper-table, ascended the staircase, and beheld her prostrate by the bedside, earnestly supplicating a throne of grace ; she knelt down, and was for several minutes an unobserved spectator of the penitential pleadings of her child, for the justifying grace of God ; their prayers were mingled together, until by an act of faith, the weeping penitent appropriated the merit of her Saviour's death unto herself, and felt that "there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." Her fears now subsided into a calm tran-

quillity, the agitation of her mind was hushed into a heaven-born peace, and she "rejoiced with joy unspeakable, and full of glory." Her mother beheld with delight the happy change, and was amply repaid in the felicity of that hour, for fourteen years' toil, care, and anxiety : with Simeon of old, she could say, " Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

Possessing the smile of God, and the love that seeks the happiness of every creature, Julia anxiously waited an opportunity for relating the interesting particulars of the preceding day to her cousin, who she doubted not, would immediately commence the pursuit of a blessing so invaluable ; she was disappointed, at perceiving the listlessness and indifference with which Ellen treated the subject, and for the first time, was painfully convinced of the difference existing in their views and feelings.

In every other respect, Julia saw her

cousin all that she could desire, intelligent, accomplished, and amiable ; nor was she altogether destitute of religious feeling, for frequently when listening to the truths of the gospel, and engaged in the public worship of the sanctuary, the tear glistened in her eye, and unconsciously stole down her cheek, but when returning home, her attention would immediately be arrested by the smile of a companion, the conversation of a friend, or the vacant look of a by-stander. . The cool indifference which she generally manifested towards spiritual and eternal things, did not elude the vigilance of her parents ; it was observed with corroding anxiety ; they faithfully represented, that youth did not exempt her from the claim which the great Author of her existence possessed to the homage of her mind, and the consecration of her powers ; and they were now buoyed up with the hope, that the influence and example of Julia would have the desired effect, of engaging her heart in the service of religion.

The ministry of Mr. H——, who was at that time stationed in N——, was duly appreciated by both families : gifted with an original and talented mind, furnished and embellished with extensive acquisitions of knowledge and learning, urged into diligent and continual exertion, by his fervent and zealous piety, his public discourses were valued by persons of taste and education, and were particularly attractive to young and inquiring minds. The lively interest he took in the welfare of each member of his flock, rendered his pastoral visits highly beneficial and acceptable ; the “ lambs ” formed the objects of his peculiar care, and were gently led into “ pastures of tender grass,” and “ by the waters of quietness : ” with others, the cousins were favoured with no inconsiderable share of his attention and esteem, which was gratefully acknowledged by feelings of reverence, respect, and love.

Mrs. Grey was sensibly affected with emotions of pleasure and gratitude when complying with the wish of her daughter

to attend the private meeting for religious communion, in which her name had been enrolled as a member for the last eighteen years. The diffidence and modesty, which at all times characterized the deportment of Julia, preserved her mother from any apprehension or fear of her becoming *too forward*, and she continually endeavoured to draw forth into exercise, those gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, which lay hid from the observation of all but herself.

When receiving a note of trial into the society, Julia's natural timidity overcame the resolution she had previously formed, of relating the particulars of the *change* she had recently experienced, and a flood of tears could only evince her sincerity in thus making a profession of her faith in Christ. The penetrating eye of Mr. H——, with the solemn and affecting manner in which he repeated, "wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth?" made an indelible impression upon her

mind, which neither time nor circumstances succeeded in erasing from her memory

The parents saw with concern, the want of a suitable seminary, where Julia and Ellen could complete their education without leaving the society of home ; fearing that the contaminating influence of a large boarding-school would prove injurious to those religious principles, which had with much care been implanted in their hearts ; they waited a considerable period for an opportunity of placing them under the care of Miss Phillips, who received a limited number of pupils, and was well qualified to discharge the duties devolving upon her.

The fear pressed heavily upon the mind of Julia, that without the fostering care of her mother, the tender plant of *grace* in her heart, would soon wither and die ; she was led importunately to ask for the promised *aid* and *assistance* of that God, who is “ able to keep ” those “ from falling,” who put their trust in him ; and she

resolved to make a *firm* and *decided* stand for religion, among her future associates.

The promise of frequent epistles from her dear mother, and a partial knowledge of the Rev. Mr. R——, who resided at M——, cheered her depressed spirits, and enabled her to leave home with some degree of composure.

CHAPTER II.

THE parting kiss and affectionate embraces of parents and relatives, with the scenes and tender recollections of childhood, threw an "air of sadness" over the youthful countenances of the cousins, as they silently pursued their journey, meditating on the past, and fearful of the future : even the forest of Sherwood failed to excite their notice or observation, and they unconsciously found themselves at the door of their new abode ; a spacious, old-fashioned house, the birth-place, and former residence of a late noble lord, celebrated for writing his "Advice to his Son."

Miss Phillips, who in early life was the intimate friend of Mrs. Harris, was of a *decidedly religious* character. In youth she had been somewhat gay and thoughtless ; but a succession of losses and disappointments, led her to see the folly of

leaning upon this *earth* for support and comfort, which is

“ A broken reed at best, but oft a spear.”

She renounced the world with its allurements, and consecrated her superior talents to the service of piety, proving the consolations of the gospel alone able to heal her wounded mind. Naturally affable, kind, and generous, her urbanity of manners soon gained the affections of the poor, to whom she was at all times a disinterested friend and counsellor. Accustomed to maintain her authority in the *school-room*, she was sometimes led insensibly to slide into the character of *dictator* in the *social circle* ; but her frank and ingenuous acknowledgment of error, quickly removed every unpleasant feeling, and her society was universally desired and sought. She received her new pupils with affectionate tenderness, and tried every effort, by administering to their gratification and happiness, to make them forget the pain of separation from relatives.

They were soon introduced to their fu-

ture companions, Louisa Anderson, Marianne, and Charlotte Norwood, and Sophia Bailey, who anticipated much pleasure in the society of the new-comers.

Louisa was early deprived of parental care : the lingering consumption which terminated her father's existence, was speedily followed by the delirious fever of her mother, who in a few days became also an inhabitant of an unseen eternity. Thus left an orphan at the age of five, she became an inmate in Mr. Sander's dwelling ; he being left sole guardian in her father's will. Her romantic turn of mind, did not meet with any counteraction in the early part of her education, and at the age of fifteen, when committed to the care of Miss Phillips, she was a strange melange of good and evil. Possessed of a lively imagination, she would abandon herself to its wayward fancies, forget all that is *actual*, and being more occupied with the *ideal* than the *present*, she condemned the *realities of life*, as unworthy of her attention, and consequently was a

perfect slattern. Having gained some exalted notions of human nature from attending the Socinian ministry, which well agreed with the natural pride of her own heart, she viewed herself as quite competent to practise virtue and to shun vice. Though affectionate and generous, she could seldom boast of having friends, the ardency of her attachment soon giving place to poetic effusions, of brighter regions in her imaginative Elysium : very susceptible, she formed many hasty intimacies, but they were no sooner formed than broken, for she appeared more anxious to *gain* the favour of *many*, than to *secure* the affections of *one*.

Marianne and Charlotte Norwood had been trained in a boarding-school from their infancy : their step-mother, considering this the most effectual way of silencing the censorious world, in her suspected partiality towards her own children. Marianne was loquacious, sarcastic, and witty ; ever ready to make all the objects of her *satire*, and resembling touch-

wood in taking *offence* from others, she seldom allowed the natural affection of her heart to disclose itself, but was generally engaged in some petty feud or quarrel; the latent energies of her mind were never called forth, and *she* that loved *no one*, had *no one* to love *her*.

Charlotte was inferior to her sister in her capacity for learning, had been frightened in her childhood with *ghost-stories*, which still retained a cowardly influence over her mind; and she was selfish, morose, and revengeful.

Sophia Bailey, a good-natured, passionate girl, had been papa's *pet*, and mamma's *favourite*, for the last twelve years, and was now sent to school for fear of being *spoiled*.

Miss Phillips congratulated herself on the characters of her new pupils, who free from all affectation, were modest, unassuming, and truly amiable; she sedulously renewed her efforts to correct those errors in their companions, that had been allowed to grow unrestrained, until all around

them, felt the sad effects of a *defective* education ; and endeavoured to instil religious principles into their minds, sensible that without these, she should in vain expect them to become happy and virtuous.

The cousins were kept in constant surprise and astonishment, at the transports of the sentimentalist—the keen censure of the disaffected—the ignorance and malice of the churl—and the peevish irritability of the darling ;—strangers to the passions that produced these effects, they recoiled (as the sensitive plant from the touch) at their solicitations to partake the joys of friendship, and were more than ever endeared to each other. The world in miniature was presented to their inspection, a new scene was open before them, and often did they contrast the views they formerly held of human nature, with those they were now compelled to adopt ; frequently did they gratefully acknowledge the restraining grace of God, and the kindness of their parents in correcting

their errors, and preparing them to choose on the side of virtue.

They were early entrusted with the secret of Marianne's attempts to frighten her sister, by procuring a person to station herself nightly under her window, and make various terrific noises. Charlotte smothered in the bed-clothes, believed that the death-watch, the screech-owl, and the dog's howling, were prognostics of her speedy dissolution. Her superstitious fear of these ominous reports, frequently made her fancy a midnight-spectre, spring from its ghostly ambush, and present itself before her closed eyes ; and when she slept, she would invariably awake in terror, from a frightful dream, of a funeral, coffin, or the doleful knell. Julia could not retract the promise of secrecy which she gave, before she was acquainted with its importance, but endeavoured to expose the absurdity of giving an ominous meaning to the casualties of life ; in some degree she succeeded in allaying Charlotte's fears, by assuring her, that the Almighty never

employs wood-worms, owls, and dogs, to announce the approach of death, and commended her to fortify her mind against these gloomy presages, by securing the favour of that Being who disposes of events, and governs futurity.

Julia's new situation exposed her to many persecutions, temptations, and trials; and has it frequently has been the case, that the graces of the christian have flourished and prospered more in the storm, than in the sunshine, so it was with her; fearful of dishonouring the cause she had espoused, and jealous of her own heart, she used much watchfulness over her conduct, examining the motives, thoughts, words, and actions, of each day, and continued "instant in prayer" for those supplies of grace, of which she felt her need, in order to "adorn the doctrine of God her Saviour." She obeyed her mother's injunction, "improve your time:" the habits of early rising she had acquired at home, gave her opportunity for reading, prayer, and meditation, which

prepared her mind for the exercises of the day. She never suffered herself to be triflingly employed, but entered with all her energy, into whatever was "praiseworthy and good:" hence she made great proficiency in her scholastic pursuits, excelled her competitors in what are commonly called accomplishments, and generally bore away the prize, to the conviction of all that she deserved it. Her forbearance, when "persecuted for righteousness' sake," was proverbial: she never appeared displeased: it seemed as though no impression could be made, injurious to her companions, and she was prepared to *forget*, before an offence was offered. There could not exist a more striking contrast, than appeared in the conduct of Julia and Marianne: the *resentment* of injury to the latter, was closely connected with her *honour*, while Julia, not offering the petition in vain, "forgive us our trespasses, as we *forgive* them that trespass against us," on all occasions threw the mantle of love over the offender, and was

anxious to prove, that no sort of malignity was indulged on her part.

Miss Phillips saw with pleasure the developement of her christian graces, and allowed her frequent opportunities for religious communion with the members of society; the visits she paid to the family of the Rev. Mr. R——, were rendered very profitable to her growth in grace, and the instructions and advices of her mother were sacredly attended to, and rigidly observed.

Julia earnestly desired her cousin's attention to the "things that belonged to her peace;" experiencing the "ways of religion to be ways of pleasantness," she constantly recommended by her example and precept, its superior excellency.

Ellen acknowledged its value, confessed the inability of her pursuits to fill the vacuum she constantly felt, or constitute her happiness; and yet, strange as it may appear (to those unacquainted with the depravity of the human heart) remained a stranger to the vital principles of chris-

tianity ; not wholly without concern, and frequently manifesting signs of sensibility, she persuaded herself, that as she was not proof against conviction, she should at some future time, yield her heart to its saving influence. In vain did Julia present to her notice, the uncertainty of human life, and the awful consequences of *procrastination* ; weak and irresolute, she gladly listened to the temptation, that the prayers of her pious parents and relatives would not remain unanswered, but avail in her behalf. She satisfied the awakenings of conscience with the thought, that as she experienced the operations of the Holy Spirit, and possessed some degree of tenderness, it would be in her power in any moment of danger to yield her heart to the requirements of God's law, and experience the salvation of the gospel.

Ellen was a true lover of home, and the finest feelings of her heart were closely connected with her father's fire-side and family circle ; possessing a natural taste for music, she devoted her leisure hours to

the gratification of her favourite passion ; when accompanying the notes of the piano, by singing the well-known airs of “ home sweet home,” and “ those ev’ning bells,” her full heart would obtain vent by a flood of tears, and unable to proceed, she would pathetically exclaim, “ there’s no place like home, there’s no place like home.”

Hours of pleasure were spent by the cousins, in examining the veined leaf—the half-closed bud—or the blooming flower.—Many delightful walks and rural rambles did they enjoy in the vicinity of M—— ; sensibly alive to the beauties of the sloping meadow, the winding rivulet, and the fruitful corn-field, it was a matter of surprise, that many, and even some of their companions, should feel no interest in the delightful scenes which surrounded them. Julia’s thoughts and affections ascended from nature, up to nature’s God, and she experienced an indescribable felicity in saying, “ my Father made them all :” to her, the noontide sun,

the cheerful day, the full-orbed moon, and silent night, the green earth, and the bespangled firmament, the fruitful shower, and the healthy breeze, streams, woods, and mountains, nay, the whole creation was vocal, and the universe was filled with the song, "the Lord is good."

The dull routine of school exercises, and the punctuality and order which characterized the establishment of Miss Phillips, were not at all congenial to Louisa's taste, who preferred a *stroll* through the adjacent fields, or a moonlight *reverie*, to the improvement of her mind, and she daily sighed for the arrival of the period, when she should uninterruptedly enjoy the wild extravagancies of her fancy. Scraps of rhyme and stanzas of poetry, were repeatedly found, in which she breathed forth her discontent, and the pleasure she anticipated in being released from the thralldom of subjection.

Miss Phillips, grieved to perceive the dissatisfaction attending all her endeavours to make Louisa happy, proposed a

day's recreation the ensuing week, in visiting Newstead Abbey, the seat of the late Lord Byron.

The *days* and even the *hours* that intervened before the fulfilment of this promise, were speedily numbered ; every book was searched, that could give information of the *edifice* or its late *proprietor*, and the youthful group, sanguine in their expectations, forgot the ordinary avocations in which they were engaged, and forfeited many tickets through negligence and inattention.

Louisa's *imagination* now took wing, and pictured to her mind, the sacred convent, with its lady-abbess, and veiled nuns ; the vesper-bell, and devotional hymn ; the paternosters, and ave-marias ; the ivory crucifix, and the string of beads ; every thing she knew of catholicism, was portrayed before her, and she indulged in the contemplation, of at once entering into the sublime feelings of awe and reverence, she conceived its ceremonies and observancies inspired.

The equanimity of Julia under this excitement, subjected her to the *sarcasm* of Marianne, who believed, "she would rather attend a prayer-meeting, or be catechised by Mr. R——." Convinced of the vanity of trusting to the world for enjoyment, she did not suffer her happiness to depend upon *casualties*, and though anxious to participate in the expected pleasure, her desires were duly regulated, and preserved within proper limits.

The ninth of May at length arrived ; Louisa was the first to behold the rising-sun, and quickly conveyed the pleasing intelligence of a "fine morning" to her companions. The breakfast-table was soon left for the carriage, and their smiling countenances agreed with their anticipations, that "it would be the *happiest day* of their lives." They parted with the vehicle at the gate, and commenced their walk with cheerfulness ; but had not proceeded far, ere Marianne's sprightliness was diminished by the unfortunate occurrence of her new shoes pinching her

feet. Vexed with herself for wearing them on that gala-day, she was on the point of asking permission to walk without them, when the sudden appearance of the Abbey arrested her attention.

The group stood for some time admiring the beauty of its exterior, when Louisa's ears were startled at the sound of workmen : advancing a little farther to the place whence the sound proceeded, her surprise was increased, at perceiving joiners and masons, with their hammers and tools. *This scene* forming so perfect a contrast with the picture her *ideas* had framed, and being so repugnant to her *taste*, excited her malevolence towards the innocent causes of her mortification, and she expressed her wonder "how the plebians dared to desecrate the hallowed spot !" Returning to her companions, she strove to hide from their observation, the *chagrin* and *disappointment* she had experienced, and again joined in commendations of the Abbey, the front of which had a most noble and majestic appearance,

being built in the form of the west end of a cathedral, adorned with rich carvings and lofty pinnacles.

Ellen admired the reflected sun-beams upon the smooth silvery lake, from which Byron was rescued by his faithful Newfoundland dog. There was, however, *little* in a fish-pond to captivate Charlotte, who thought it resembled *all others* she had ever seen. And Sophia *expected* to see the swans sailing gracefully along, *instead* of which, they had (as if on purpose) *gone* to their island-bed.

The inscription upon the favourite Boatswain's monument, claimed their united eulogies. Louisa enraptured with its sentiments, let fall the *tear* of sympathy, but felt her pride and dignity degraded, when the truth of its dropping upon the *ashes* of a *dog* occurred to her memory.

A domestic shewed the interior of the Abbey, and hurried precipitantly from one apartment to another; destitute of that *complaisance* which generally marks the character of housekeepers, she would not

allow the visitors time for observation. One article attracted their attention, and aroused Charlotte's fears; it was a *wine-bowl* formed of a *human skull*, bearing an inscription of its late possessor's, and mounted with silver. Ellen being the quickest scribe, copied the verses, and without a moment's time for reflection, they found themselves exposed to the meridian sun.

Disconcerted at the frustration of their scheme, in spending the whole day at Newstead, Miss Phillips proposed they should proceed to Hucknall, the burial-place of Byron.

This offer was gladly accepted, and in anticipation of *something* they had not *realized*, they forgot their disappointment, and commenced the walk with cheerfulness. The road lay through a succession of fields ripening for the mower's scythe; violets, primroses, and cowslips, profusely covered the banks, and the sweet notes of the warbling choristers, were harmonious-

ly blended with the peasant's song of praise.

The cousins endeavoured to call the attention of their associates to the beauties of creation, but found them much more disposed to utter *complaints*. The penetrating rays of the sun had occasioned a distressing head-ache to Louisa—Marianne was bitterly reproaching her shoemaker for causing her so much pain—Charlotte was wearied—and Sophia wanted something to satisfy the cravings of hunger. With the loan of Ellen's veil, and the exchange of Julia's shoes, expectation was again raised, and anxious to behold the repository of the dead, they arrived at the village Inn, partook of some refreshment, and sallied forth in search of the sexton.

Their astonishment was excited at beholding the poor, humble edifice, which contained the *remains* of so great a personage; and when entering its damp aisles, and surveying its white-washed walls, it appeared incredible, that he should have

been brought from *Missolonghi* to lie there. They stood upon the stone that covered his vault, read the simple tablet to departed genius, and felt a solemn awe, in reflecting that he was *then* an inhabitant of eternity.

His character, as delineated on the tablet, drew from Julia a pitying sigh, that he should have perverted his superior talent to the service of sin—been the means of diffusing vice and infidelity—and *died* without leaving an evidence of entertaining a hope of a blissful immortality.—Louisa could say nothing in extenuation of his private conduct, but was enthusiastic in admiring his poetic genius, brilliant imagination, and mental endowments. Ellen reflected on the inability of this world to give the highly gifted Byron, satisfaction, ease, or peace : it yielded neither support nor comfort when required, and he fled from his family and his country, to seek happiness in a *strange* land : still the phantom eluded his grasp, and *he* who boasted of twice

determining to put a period to his existence, was summoned into the presence of a righteous Judge, to "give an account of the deeds done in the body." She left the church deeply affected with the vanity of the world, lamenting that she possessed no higher source of enjoyment, and *resolved* she would not be numbered among its votaries.

Disappointed and fatigued with the day's excursion, the youthful party found their nearest way to the turnpike, entered the carriage, that had been long in waiting, and reached M—— at the close of the evening.

Notwithstanding the noble *resolution* of Ellen, in disentangling herself from the fascinating allurements of the world, she failed in the *performance* of her vow, and *halting* between the conviction of truth, and a dereliction of duty, she experienced the remorse of conscience and the bitterness of repentance, inseparably connected with *indecision*. The mild precepts of the gospel, and the terrors of the law, alter-

nately presented their cogent appeals to her notice, which were as quickly removed by the indefinite and undefinable idea, of a *future* day adjusting the difference existing in her theory and practice. She was not insensible to the value of religion as the "one thing needful," but betrayed too little regard to the uncertainty of time; that which she should have been anxious to secure *to-day*, was left to the contingencies of *to-morrow*.

As the summer vacation approached, the cousins were unremitting in their exertions to acquire that proficiency in learning which would merit the smile and approbation of relatives at home, and secure the prize promised to diligence and attention. By steady and persevering efforts, they effected their laudable purpose, and to the discomfiture of their companions, obtained the reward for application and improvement.

CHAPTER III.

THE cousins experienced that *pain* is the general concomitant of *pleasure*; for the demonstrations of joy upon their arrival at home, were quickly succeeded by sorrow and regret, which *parting* again produced. . On their return to school, a new companion was found in the stead of Sophia Bailey, whose slight indisposition was considered by her indulgent parents as an insuperable barrier, to her advancement in knowledge.

Elizabeth Darnley studied an extreme politeness of behaviour, and was not ignorant of the advantage which her courtesy and personal attractions gained in the estimation of strangers. Superior to her associates, in years and the dignity of her parentage, she looked with supercilious scorn and contempt upon those whom she considered as her inferiors; but with much dissimulation concealed the hidden feel-

ings of her heart, and was constantly professing the sincerity of her attachment and esteem. Suspicious and jealous of her own importance, she envied and hated *her* as a rival, by whom she was eclipsed ; and with feigned expressions of love and affection, her insinuating manners wrought upon the artless credulity of the cousins, who for a time, yielded obedience to her authority, which soon became insupportable. Her attention to dress, solicitude to display her charms, and love of flattery, were excessive ; and to gratify her prevailing passions, she became an adept in artifice, intrigue, and stratagem, in order to gain the adulation of youths of the opposite sex.

Notwithstanding the scrutinizing eye and the vigilant watch which Miss Phillips exercised over her suspected pupil, Elizabeth found means to write letters, send messages, and exchange visits with her confederates. Her delight appeared to be, in entangling them in difficulties, and involving them in intricate perplexi-

ties (by unremitting attention to herself) in which *her* judgment should be sought — *her* sway maintained — and *her* authority acknowledged. Nothing could be further from her motive, than a sincere attachment to the objects who relied on her warm expressions of love; but enjoying the possession of influential power, she sacrificed every principle of integrity and honesty, at the shrine of assumption and tyranny. The dexterity with which she inveigled servants, threatened and conjured her companions, to preserve her intrigues a *secret*, was truly astonishing; the expostulations of Julia, either had *no* effect, or the hasty vow to retract her adventures, was no sooner made, than broken, and her associates dreading that they should be found accomplices in her guilt, by not divulging the truth, grew suspicious, reserved, and disaffected, towards their governess.

Finding remonstrance vain, Julia felt it her duty to acquaint Miss Phillips with the clandestine proceedings of her new

pupil ; *her* knowledge of which, was very far below the actual state of affairs.

Strict and coercive measures were adopted, in order to prevent the repetition of similar conduct, while Elizabeth's malevolence and malignity were cherished with feelings of animosity towards the informer ; her implacable resentment, led her to solicit the aid of Marianne's keen sarcasm, and Charlotte's malicious revenge, to requite the injury she had sustained, in the loss of her power, and satisfy the rancour of her hatred.

The conviction Julia felt, of having performed her duty, in endeavouring to rescue her enemy from the path of ruin, which most probably would have terminated the course she was pursuing, supported her mind, amid the taunts, reproach, and ridicule, with which she was loaded. Conscious of the approving smile of her heavenly Father, the countenance of her instructor, and the friendship of her cousin, she suffered not her peace of mind to be disturbed by *those* who excited

her pity ; and patiently enduring persecution, she reflected the superiority of that *religion*, which “suffereth long, and is kind.”

Impatient of control, again and again, was Elizabeth discovered breaking her promises, and concerting plans, by which she might gain her object, and escape the vigilance of her pursuer, who succeeded in frustrating her schemes, and reducing her to increased subjection ; she viewed the restraints under which she struggled, as intolerable ; and with a perseverance and ardour, which would have done credit to a better cause, secretly watched an opportunity of absconding from school.—She disgracefully fled from the protection and instruction of Miss Phillips !

Sophia Bailey being convalescent, was reinstated in her former place at the seminary, and received a welcome reception from her companions.

Ellen was not an inconsiderate spectator of the sad and painful effects produced by irregular passions : the dark shades of

evil apparent in the characters of her companions, served to heighten and display the transcendant excellencies of *religion* manifested by her cousin. To her view, the lovely form of christianity was arrayed in all its charms, beauties, and attractions : frequently was she compelled, when observing the striking contrast which appeared between it and the spirit of the world, to declare in its favour, profess her attachment to its cause, and acknowledge herself one of its adherents ; but unhappily these buds of promise were evanescent in their continuance, and the next hour witnessed her cool indifference and total neglect of *that* cause which she had so recently espoused. Thus weeks and months passed away ; while good and bad principles alternately maintained their sway, and so counteracted each other, that neither could exclusively prevail. Her resolutions and vows, met with their usual fate of *procrastination* on the first temptation that presented itself, and left her again and again, without having gained a

single step of ground, to commence afresh her work of repentance and renovation.

Julia often referred to the disappointment attending their excursion to Newstead as an instance of the inadequacy of earth-born joys to satisfy the immortal mind; but her companions unwearied in their eager pursuit of pleasure, attributed the frustration of their expectations to incidental circumstances, and with the ardour and impetuosity of youth, grasped every airy bubble that promised enjoyment. The change of seasons, and the approach of winter, released them from the dull monotony of summer recreations, and formed a new epoch in their evening amusements.

The funds of the Dispensary being in a declining state, a considerable number of young ladies in the town, united their efforts to establish a Bazaar; the produce of which, was to be devoted to this humane institution. The assistance of Miss Phillips and her pupils was early solicited, and readily promised.

Novelty and a desire for *rivalry* now proved a stimulus to exertion. Even *Louisa* felt her heart engaged, and precipitately spent the whole of her pocket-money, in purchasing valuable articles; half of which were useless. Ellen, more judicious than her companion, contrived to make her *work* supply the place of costly materials, and was unremitting in her endeavours to excel; part of each night was spent in scheming, and the following day saw her plans executed with judgment, neatness, and taste. Marianne, her competitor, at length reluctantly yielded to Ellen's superior skill, and a total indifference and negligence succeeded her desire for emulation. Julia sometimes felt half ashamed that her contributions were so small, compared with those of her cousin; but she did not consider the object so important, as to demand the sacrifice of every other laudable pursuit. Acting from *principle*, her exertions, though less noisy and ostentatious, were more permanent and substantial: for like

the *gently falling rain* her unobtrusive efforts, encouraged other friends to proceed in the project, long after the *sudden shower* had ceased. Charlotte's selfishness would not allow either her sordid treasure, or leisure time, to be expended for the benefit of *others* ; and she gladly joined Sophia, in preferring a playful game, or the dressing of a doll.

It was with sensations of painful regret that Miss Phillips witnessed the inefficiency of her endeavours to eradicate the seeds of *evil* which daily evidenced themselves in the conduct of her wayward pupils. Destitute of the pruning-knife of *discipline* and the culture of *education* in the first stage of life, early principles and deep-rooted prejudices, acquired additional strength with advancing years, and maintained their ascendancy to the subversion of every attempt to suppress them. While their outward deportment manifested the irregularities of their unsubdued passions, the *radical error* existed in the *estrangement* of their hearts from God. Yielding

to every ensnaring temptation, and indulging their natural corruptions, they became increasingly averse to every thing holy and sacred ; and would not permit *religion* to transmute the base metal into pure gold.

Julia, experiencing the transforming influence of divine love, exhibited its superior excellence in the ordinary avocations of life ; and succeeded in gaining the *esteem* though not the *imitation* of her associates.

Ellen also presented in her character every thing truly amiable and lovely ; securing the approbation and favour of her companions and governess, she walked steadily and firmly in the paths of rectitude and virtue ; but hesitating in surrendering her heart to the operations of the Holy Spirit, she *rested* in being an “*almost christian*.”

With mingled feelings of pleasure and regret, the cousins looked forward to the approaching vacation ; they anticipated the society of relatives at home, with eager

delight, but the thought that their education was now completed, repressed the intensity of their desires to leave school.

The day of parting at length arrived, and they anxiously sat at the parlour window expecting the approach of Mr. Harris in his gig. The kind father and uncle, soon appeared—received and returned the affectionate embraces of his daughter and niece—who bade *farewell* to their school-fellows and governess,—and were quickly seated by his side, traversing the forest of Sherwood.

CHAPTER IV.

NOTHING could exceed the ecstasy of Ellen on her arrival at home, in being presented with an infant sister; in a transport of joy, she clasped the lovely babe to her heart—declared it was the happiest hour of her life—and promised to become its constant nurse.

Several years had elapsed, since Mr. and Mrs. Harris were called to resign the last of four sons, who successively passed from the *cradle* to the *grave*. They had purposely deferred the baptism of their infant, that Ellen might be present at the ceremony, and the following Sabbath, little Emily was devoted to the Holy Triune Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Ellen felt particular interest in the sacred ordinance, and the solemn and affecting manner in which the minister conducted the service, wrought powerfully upon her mind, and induced a train of se-

rious reflections. She saw in a clearer light, that *baptism* is the *sign* and *seal* of the covenant of grace ; that it is the grand initiatory *act* by which we enter into this covenant, in order to claim all its spiritual blessings, and to take upon ourselves all its obligations. She felt thankful to her parents for having early incorporated her in the church of Christ, but was painfully conscious of her *guilt* in not redeeming the pledge then given, of consecration to the service of God.

The thin attenuated form of Mrs. Harris, and an evident decay of strength, filled the minds of her friends with foreboding fears ; and the return of spring was ardently desired, in hopes that a country residence, and frequent excursions in the air, would restore her to a state of convalescence. Increasing weakness and debility rendered the fond mother unable to give support to the babe, whose infant wailings filled her heart with anguish and sorrow ; and Ellen had soon to resign her office of nurse, to one more experienced

than herself, residing a mile distant, and who was worthy of the implicit confidence thus placed in her. She was unremitting in her attentions to her beloved mother, and watched the slow, yet steady progress of the disorder with corroding anxiety; often did she express her fears to Julia, that the *worm* was at the *root* of the *gourd*, under whose ample shade she had sat seventeen years with delight and safety.

The flattering nature of the complaint, persuaded Mrs. Harris that it was not out of the power of medicine to effect her recovery. The months of spring and summer passed, without awakening in her own mind, any serious apprehension of danger. At this time, death was not a subject of agreeable contemplation; the circumstances and the pain of the event, sometimes alarmed her, and she shrank from the prospect of a season which she apprehended might be so fearful. Her infant also was a strong tie that bound her to the earth, her maternal solicitude and affection, were concentrated in her

Emily, and whenever the subject of death was introduced, she expressed the difficulty she felt in saying, "thy will be done."

Her friends, concerned to see her buoyed up with a delusive hope, tried various ineffectual methods to familiarize the subject of separation; and fearful of the consequences of procrastinating too long, Mrs. Grey felt it her indispensable duty to express her fears as to the termination of her unfavourable symptoms. After a considerable pause, in which the Holy Spirit strengthened her faith, and enabled her to overcome the weakness of nature; she replied with an air of uncommon dignity, blended with an expression of resignation to the divine will, "If I am to die, all will be right, God is too wise to err, and too good to be unkind."

From the time of this communication she abandoned all hope of recovery, and frequently referred to her dissolution with a calmness and composure that indicated her prepared state of mind to meet her last enemy. The prospect of her removal

now presented nothing appalling; she contemplated it rather with exulting emotions; but the pleasures of christian hope, were damped by the reflection that her daughter possessed not that religion which would fortify her in adversity, and counterbalance the loss of a mother.

Observing Ellen almost heart-broken at the idea of her departure, she said, "Compose yourself my dear; you must not sorrow as those without hope, for I have a blooming *hope* of spending a happy eternity. My flesh and my heart fail, but God is my rock. I know that *my* Redeemer liveth, and that when he shall appear, *I* shall appear with him—yes, I shall see him as he is. And though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for *he* is with me, his rod and his staff they comfort me."

On Ellen's hoping that she would yet recover, she answered, "Your affection makes you sanguine; all prospect of my recovery is gone, but my mind is undisturbed by this; yea, I rather wish to *de-*

part and be with Christ, which is far better. I am anxious that *you* should make God your friend ; he is a present help in time of need ; surrender your heart to him, and then you will be prepared for every dispensation of his providence. Promise me that you will seek his favour." Ellen burst into tears. " Let not those tears deceive you ; they flow from affection to your dying mother. If you desire to cheer my passage to the tomb, you must give me a pledge, that henceforth you will consider yourself exclusively devoted to the glory of your Creator." Ellen articulated—" I must—I will."—" Then I am happy," replied her mother, " I shall die depending upon your fidelity to this engagement."

Mrs. Harris remained some time in the same peaceful, happy state of mind, relying only for acceptance with God, on the atonement of her Saviour. When the final hour drew nigh, her joy increased, and repeating the words of the psalmist, "into thine hand I commit my spirit ;

thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth ;" she quietly fell asleep in Jesus.

Her remains were deposited in the family vault, and a funeral sermon preached the following sabbath to a crowded congregation, from the words of Jesus Christ, " I am the resurrection and the life ; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."

The loss of one so excellent and pious, was sensibly felt in the family and social circles, and also by the members of the christian community to which she belonged : her praise, like the scent of the faded rose, long perfumed her memory, and retained its sweetness many years after the sentence had been pronounced, " ashes to ashes, and dust to dust."

Mr. Harris bowed to this afflictive dispensation of God's providence, as became a christian : exercising a lively faith, in the wisdom, power, and goodness, of his Creator, he adopted the appropriate language of Job, and said, " The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be

the name of the Lord." He endeavoured to assuage the grief of Ellen, who being a stranger to the consolations of the gospel, experienced none of its efficacy to heal her wounded mind. Her sorrow was genuine, deep, and lasting ; and a considerable time elapsed, ere she would receive any comfort from the assurance of her mother's happiness and felicity.

Julia saw with pain that this trial was not sanctified to her cousin ; for instead of submitting to the will of her heavenly Father, she repined and murmured at her bereavement, and fancied she " did well to be angry." Hardening her heart to the voice of love, that said, " set your affections on things above," she became less susceptible to the operations of the Holy Spirit, evinced greater negligence in attending the means of grace, (especially private prayer) and was seldom found perusing the word of God.

Miss Phillips wrote an affectionate letter to Ellen, in which she sympathized with her in her affliction, and kindly of-

ferred her counsel and direction in any future season of difficulty. This epistle bore the intelligence of the sudden death of her late school-fellow Sophia Bailey, who was injudiciously taken from her sick-bed and conveyed home by her foolishly fond mother. This treatment, as her medical attendant expected, increased the disorder, and rendered the power of medicine ineffectual. In the course of a few days, the *idol* of her parents, was snatched from their embrace by the resistless grasp of death.

The repeated stroke of the "insatiate archer" deeply affected Ellen, and recalled to her memory the scene of her beloved mother's dying hours. She was presented with another instance of the uncertainty of human life ; and convinced of the estrangement of her heart from God, and her unprepared state to meet death, she *trembled* lest the sentence should be executed upon herself, "cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground !" Various were the methods she tried to drown the voice

of *conscience*, which still whispered, "thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting." Feeling an aching void within, and dissatisfied with herself, she listened attentively the following sabbath to an impressive discourse delivered to young people; in which were clearly shewn, the folly and vanity of the world, and the happiness of *those* who choose God for their portion. When singing

"Vain delusive world, adieu,
With all of creature good !
Only Jesus I pursue,
Who bought me with his blood.
All thy pleasures I forego,
I trample on thy wealth and pride :
Only Jesus will I know,
And Jesus crucified."

the emotions of her heart were indescribable; a gracious influence rested upon the whole congregation, and every individual participated in

"The solemn awe that dares not move."

The minister, seeing the effect produced, seized the opportunity of making another appeal to their hearts in favour of *deci-*

sion ; and prompted by the impulse of the moment, delivered a short address, portraying the dangers of *delay*, and the *necessity* and *duty* under which young persons are placed, of performing their baptismal vow, in renouncing the follies and vanities of this deceitful world, and devoting the bloom of life to their Creator, in whose sight,

“ A flower when offered in the bud,
Is no vain sacrifice.”

A solemn pause ensued ; many hearts *that* night yielded to the operations of divine grace—renounced the world—forsook their sins—and experienced the “ new birth unto righteousness,” manifesting the fruits thereof, by a holy and consistent life.

But this was not the case with Ellen ; for although the *strivings* of the Spirit were more sensibly felt than on any former occasion, she had been so long accustomed to say, “ Go thy way for *this* time,” that there was little difficulty in her being again persuaded by the artful insinuation

of her enemy, to *defer* the time of decision to some *future* opportunity. The impressions were soon effaced, and a succession of engagements, served as a plea for indifference and negligence towards spiritual concerns. She soon felt greater repugnance to experimental religion, and had it not been for the *living* examples she continually beheld in her relatives, she felt as though she could readily believe it a *mere delusion*. It was impossible that she could suspect the conduct of Julia, who, free from all guile and hypocrisy, laid open the secrets of her heart ; in her *cousin*, Ellen found, what she was forced to believe, a *genuine* christian.

Julia's unwearied exertions for the benefit of others, spoke loudly in her praise. She literally "went about doing good." Regardless of the world's keen censure, she pursued "the even tenor of her way," actively engaging in whatever was calculated to ameliorate the distresses of her fellow-creatures, or advance the glory of God. She was one of the church's bright-

est ornaments, and though she knew it not, was universally admired and beloved by its members. As Secretary to the Bible Society—Collector for Missions—Teacher in the Sabbath School—Distributor of Tracts—Visitor of the Benevolent Society—and Member of the Dorcas Meeting—her zealous services were found invaluable. Often did “the blessing of those who were ready to perish,” fill her heart with joy, and she ever experienced it “more blessed to give, than to receive.” Her natural diffidence and modesty, sought the most secret way of dispensing her bounty ; and many times were the hearts of the poor filled with gratitude for the supply of their necessities, while they remained ignorant of the person to whom they were indebted.

The popularity of the Rev. Mr. B—— increased the number of his congregation, and the family of Mr. Barnett, consisting of himself, his wife, daughter, and servants, were soon accommodated with one of the best pews.

Mr. Barnett was a man of low, vulgar habits, and owed his rise in the scale of society, to the fortunate circumstance of his being a clever mechanic, at the time of unprecedented prosperity, which, for a few years, marked the staple manufactory of the town. He built a handsome country residence—bought his carriage—and with his footman behind—considered himself a *gentleman*. He was received by the respectable part of the community, with mistrust and suspicion, owing to his violation of a contract, and evident dishonesty, in a business transaction with Mr. Harris. His anxiety to remove the ignominy attached to his character, was manifested by familiar smiles and nods, expressing his great desire, that the *past* should be buried in the shades of oblivion, and the *future* witness him recognised by the injured, as a friend.

One morning when Julia was assisting her cousin in the necessary preparations for a select party, Ellen was surprised at receiving a note of invitation from Miss

Barnett, to spend the following Thursday at the villa. She was somewhat embarrassed, and hesitated what reply to make; her timidity shrank from the idea of visiting an entire stranger, whose appearance and manners, indicated that she was proud and haughty; though the writing and orthography of the note, did not produce any apprehension of a superior. In this dilemma, her father's direction and counsel were sought; who charitably hoped the former conduct of Mr. Barnett had been attended with repentant feelings, and unwilling to show that he cherished any sort of malignity, gave his consent. An answer of acceptance was therefore returned, though Ellen half dreaded the approach of the day, and many times wished her cousin could accompany her. Miss Barnett kindly anticipated this wish, and pleased with the opportunity of making additions to her circle of new formed friends, sent the same invitation to Julia, which was waiting her arrival at home. Accustomed to sacrifice her own inclina-

tion, to advance the comfort and happiness of others, she dissipated the fears of Ellen, by sending a compliance.

After a pleasant walk, the cousins were met at the gate of the villa by Mr. Barnett, who unceremoniously introduced them to his daughter, by calling, "Jane, here's your friends come."

Miss Barnett (which *title* her mamma wished to be particularly observed) received her visitors with a cool, repulsive air. Her rich satin dress, pendant jewels, graceful ringlets, and high studded combs, formed a perfect contrast with the dirty, slovenly appearance of her mother, whose flushed, broily face, required a little discernment to ascertain whether she were *mistress* or *cook*. Her dishabille was soon exchanged for a fashionable dress, profusely ornamented, which produced so great a metamorphosis, as led the cousins to question her identity.

Fond of display, Mr. Barnett offered to shew the different apartments of his new

house, in which he prided himself on his *good taste* and *plenty of money*.

Among other inconsistencies, Ellen silently observed the *side-boards*, in the drawing-room and breakfast parlour, while the dining-room was *destitute* of that useful article of furniture. It was evident *expense* formed no part of the proprietor's domestic economy : china vases and costly ornaments were lavishly distributed, while a redundancy of paintings and engravings by eminent artists, covered the walls.

The library contained many valuable works, which had been purchased by the casual recommendation of a friend or newspaper ; but the many uncut leaves, conveyed the truth, that the contents were unknown to their possessors.

Mr. Barnett took down a volume of the "Spectator" and betrayed the hesitancy of his mind, as to its author, when his daughter officiously answered, "I have seen *Finis* at the end of the book, and therefore suppose *he* must have written it."

Julia, anxious to conceal the emotions

which this disclosure of her uncultivated mind excited, remarked that "Mrs. More's Practical Piety," was well worthy the eulogies of the "Reviewer's" and the attentive perusal of every female.

"I would not give *credit* to all it contains," replied Miss Barnett, "for I have lately seen a pamphlet, in which Ann Moor is proved to be an *impostor* in pretending to live without food."

Ellen readily undertook to explain the mistake as to the author, and was admiring the rich binding of "Milton's Paradise Lost," which lay on the table, when her new acquaintance seized the opportunity of relating a history of her travels, which had extended to Wentworth House, the seat of Lord Milton, situated a short distance from Rotherham. The manner in which this was told, plainly indicated that the *poet* and *Wentworth House* were intimately associated in the illiterate vacant mind of the historian.

Unwilling further to expose her ignorance, the cousins surveyed a large map